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Materials for Hebrew Composition

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MATERIALS

FOR

HEBREW COMPOSITION

ADAPTED AND ARRANGED

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE.

One of the difficulties that confront the teacher of Hebrew is to find suitable pieces of connected narrative for students who, from translating sentences into Hebrew, are ready to proceed to more advanced composition. The vocabulary of such students is limited, and the simplest piece of modern narrative is not translated easily into an ancient oriental language. The help that might be given by a good English-Hebrew Lexicon is not available. The use of an antiquated English-Hebrew Lexicon is a hindrance rather than a help to the formation of a good Hebrew style. In such a work (and even such works are rare), the exact meaning or shade of meaning of words is not explained; in very many cases senses are given to words which, in the light of a modern and more exact knowledge of Hebrew, they do not bear; and early and late words are not distinguished. Indeed, students ought to be warned that an old Lexicon, whether Hebrew-English or English-Hebrew, if used at all, needs to be used with the greatest caution.

As regards the second difficulty, it is possible of course to re-translate passages from an English version of the Old Testament into Hebrew. This, however, except as an occasional exercise, is not a good practice. Much better material for Hebrew composition is supplied by an English version of the Old Testament Apocrypha or even of the New

Testament; but in the absence of an English-Hebrew Lexicon, even this exercise is too difficult for the purpose under consideration, though for more advanced students it serves the purpose very well.

I have tried to meet both the difficulties mentioned, as others no doubt have done, by adapting Old Testament narratives or passages. In doing so, I have taken liberties with the original text, which I hope will be pardoned. It should be added that I have presupposed the use by the student of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* and sometimes have made use of emendations given in the footnotes in preference to the readings of the text.

It has been my practice to read with students the texts on which the materials are based before dictating these for translation into Hebrew. The materials as printed are interleaved. This has been done in order that the student may note down words and phrases or references to Grammar and Syntax supplied by the teacher. The materials are intended primarily for beginners in Hebrew Composition. They might be used also by more advanced students for composition at sight.

I have included some lines from George Peele's "David and Bethsabe" and Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha."

M. A. C.

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I.

(COMMON HEBREW WORDS.)

Now in that city was a great king. And he lived in a fine house with his wife and his sons. And they had many servants, who did all that they commanded. And every day the sons and the brethren of the king went up to the house of God to hear the words of the priest, for he spoke to (עַל) their hearts. And one day, when the brethren of the king stood before the man of God, he said to them: "Listen to my words! The king has done all that I have commanded him. Great is his name in his own city and among all the children of the land. Nevertheless, he shall not dwell in this place for ever. His voice shall no longer be heard. His soul shall go forth, and shall not return." And the brethren went from the holy house and stood before the king, but they did not tell him what the priest had said.

II.

THE QUARREL OF THE BROTHERS.

(Genesis iv, 1–14.)

A man had two sons. One of them used to till the ground; the other was a shepherd. And it happened one day that the two of them brought a present to the Lord. The tiller of the ground carried in his hands some of his fruit, and the shepherd bore in his arms a lamb from his flock. And in the eyes of the Lord the lamb was better than the fruit. And it came to pass when the two men were in the field that the tiller of the ground rose up and slew his brother. Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against the murderer, and he said to him: "Where is thy brother? Lo, his blood crieth to me from the ground!" And the murderer replied: "How should I know? I do not keep my brother!" The Lord answered and said: "I know that the ground has opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood. Cursed art thou on account of thy brother's blood! When thou hast tilled the ground, it shall not give its strength to thee, and I will drive thee forth this day from before me."

III.

THE FLOOD.

(Genesis vii. 1–10; viii. 19–22.)

And God said: "I will preserve alive Noah and all his house, for I have seen that he is righteous." So he commanded him to take seven pairs of the clean cattle, both male and female, and seven pairs of the fowls of the air, to go into the ark. Afterwards he caused rain to fall for forty days and forty nights, in order to destroy all creatures from off the face of the ground. But Noah He brought into the ark to preserve him alive from before the waters of the flood. And Noah's wife and his sons' wives went in with him. And after the waters had returned from off the earth and Noah and all that belonged to him had come forth from the ark, God said unto himself: "I have cursed the ground on account of mankind, but again I will not curse it. I have smitten every living thing, but again I will not smite them. From the youth of mankind the imagination of the heart is evil, but I will not again do as I have done, for the burnt-offerings which man has offered upon my altar are a sweet savour unto me. The seed of the earth and the harvest shall not fail, the days of summer and winter shall not cease throughout all the days of the earth."

IV.

THE EXPULSION OF HAGAR.

(Genesis xxi. 8–19.)

Sarah: Drive out this maid and her bad son whom she hath born to thee, for he shall not be heir with son of mine!

Abraham: Why should I drive them forth? What have they done?

Sarah: I am displeased because of this bad boy. Young as he is, I have observed him mocking.

Abraham: Let not the thing displease thee!

Sarah: Drive them forth! Rise early in the morning, give thy maid a skin of water, also bread, and place upon her shoulder this young son. Dismiss them to the desert, there to roam and dwell.

Abraham: The bread will all be eaten, water fail. The boy will rest beneath a shrub and die, and none be near to hear the mother's cry.

Sarah: Let her find a well, and fill the skin with water every day.

Abraham: When morning dawns the two of them shall go, and wander in the desert to and fro. When Hagar calls, her God will hear her voice, answer, and make the mother's heart rejoice.

V.

REBEKAH AT THE WELL.

(Genesis xxiv. 1, 4, 11, 13–27.)

Abraham, being very old, sends his servant to his native land to find there a wife for his son Isaac. One evening he arrives at a well outside the city, and observes women coming forth to draw water. He makes his camels kneel, and stations himself by the well.

Servant: A maiden cometh, and on her shoulder she doth bear a jar. She goeth to the well to fill her jar, and cometh up. In truth she is a maiden fair to see! I will make haste and speak to her. Good day! pray let me drink a little from your jar!

Rebekah: Yes do, Sir. I will make haste to bring the pitcher down upon my hand. Now you may drink. In truth your camels too are thirsty. Shall I draw for them?

Servant: You are most kind.

Rebekah: Come! I will draw for them until they are done drinking.

Servant: I gaze at her in silence! Hath Yahweh prospered me or not?

Rebekah: The camels are done drinking.

Servant: Whose daughter art thou? Tell me!

Rebekah: The daughter of Bethuel, Milcah's son.

Servant: Now Yahweh, God of Abraham, be blest! Your father's house hath room for us to lodge?

Rebekah: Yes, room to lodge; and for your camels straw and provender enough.

Servant: Yahweh hath prospered me, and to the house of Abram's kindred am I come!

VI.

ABRAHAM'S THREE VISITORS.

(Genesis xviii. 1–7.)

As Abraham sat at the entrance to his tent, three men appeared unto him. And when he saw them he bowed himself to the earth. And one of the men said to him: "Fear not, for thou hast found favour in our eyes. But go and fetch a little water that we may wash our feet." And Abraham answered and said: "I will certainly go, Sir." "Yes do," said the man, "and please fetch also a morsel of bread that we may sustain ourselves." And Abraham said: "Tarry ye here and pass not on; thy servant will do all that thou hast commanded." Then Abraham went quickly into the tent, and his wife came to meet him. And she said: "What seekest thou, my lord?" And when he had told her all the commands of the visitor (angel), she said: "I have made cakes of fine meal to-day, and I have prepared a fine and tender calf, and here is curdled milk (חֶמְאָה) Take them and set them before the men." So Abraham went back quickly to the men, who were sitting under a tree, and set the food before them.

VII.

THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM.

(Genesis xxii. 1–12.)

Then God made trial of Abraham and commanded him to take his son whom he loved and go with him to a mountain and offer him up there as a burnt-offering. And Abraham rose early in the morning and said to his two servants: "Saddle the asses that we may go to a place in the mountains to offer a burnt-offering." So the two servants saddled the asses and also chopped some wood. And when they had journeyed three days, Abraham said to the servants: "Stay here with the asses, while we go farther to worship." And as they went, Isaac said to his father: "You have taken the wood for the burnt-offering and the fire and the knife. But where is the lamb?" And Abraham said to his son: "We have no lamb." His son answered: "God will provide." Then Abraham built an altar and set the wood in order, and took the knife in his hand. And suddenly (בְּרֶגַע) an angel of God appeared to him and said: "Lay not thy hand upon thy son, for now God knows that thou art a God-fearing man."

VIII.

THE DREAMER.

(Genesis xxxvii. 3–11.)

The brethren of Joseph hated him; but his father loved him more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. One day while the brethren of Joseph were binding sheaves in the field, their young brother came to them in great glee (rejoicing greatly). And they said to him: "Why is thy heart so glad? Hast thou dreamed another dream?" His brethren hated him so much that they could not speak peacefully to him. And Joseph answered and said: "I have related to you many dreams and you have envied me, but now I have dreamed the greatest dream of all! When you have heard it, you will say: Shall our young brother really be king over us or rule over us?" "Tell us your dream quickly," said the brothers, "and do not dream any more." "Listen," said Joseph, "the sun, the moon, and the stars all bowed down to me." When his brethren heard this, they were angry and hated him more than ever.

IX.

THE DREAMER AS GOVERNOR.

(Genesis xlii. 6–20.)

Then we came and bowed down before the governor of the land. And when he saw us, he spoke roughly to us and said: "Whence come ye?" And we answered and said: "From the land of Canaan are we come to buy a little food, for there is a famine in the land." Then the man was angry and said: "Ye are all spies! Ye are come down to Egypt to see the bareness of the land!" And we answered again and said: "Thy servants are not spies. We are twelve brethren. Our father is in the land of Canaan, and our youngest brother is with him this day." And the man said: "In this way I will prove you. If ye be true men, let one of you be bound in prison, while the other brethren go to fetch your youngest brother. Those who go can take with them corn for the famine of their houses." Therefore, in order that we may find favour with the governor of the land, send our youngest brother with us. For the man said: "If ye return without your youngest brother, ye are spies and ye shall surely die."

X.

NAOMI AND ELIMELECH.

(Ruth i. 1–6.)

In those days the judges used to judge in the land and used to perform all the duties of a king. And there lived in the country of Moab a man whose name was Elimelech. He had taken to wife Naomi, who bare him two sons; the name of the first was Mahlon, and the name of the second was Chilion. And when the sons grew up, they took to them Moabite wives, whose names were Orpah and Ruth. And after a time Naomi's husband died, for there was a bad famine in the land. Naomi and her sons and her daughters-in-law continued to live in the country. Then after ten years Naomi's two sons died also, and she said: "Now has God taken from me my husband and my two children. Only the wives of my sons, my two daughters-in-law, are left. I have heard that Yahweh has visited my own people and given them bread. I will arise with my two daughters-in-law, and will go back from the country of Moab and dwell in my own land."

XI.

ORPAH'S FAREWELL.

(Ruth i. 8–18.)

Now Orpah was unwilling to go back with her mother-in-law. And she lifted up her voice and wept and said: "Let me go unto my own people, for I have hope that I may find rest there." Then she kissed Naomi and spoke again saying: "You have dealt kindly with me and with the dead. God grant that you may find rest in your own land and among your own people. Ruth will cling to you. She has said to me: I will not forsake Naomi. Wherever she goes, I will go, and wherever she lodges, I will lodge. I will be with her until she grows old and until she dies, and where she is buried, there will I also be buried. Ruth will indeed go back with you, but do not intreat me to forsake my own people and my own gods." And when Orpah had ceased speaking, Naomi answered and said: "I do not intreat you to go back with me, my daughter. Do what you think best."

XII.

MARAH.

(Ruth i. 18–22.)

And when they drew near to Bethlehem, all the city was in a commotion on their account. And the women of the city came forth and said: "Who is this? And who is the girl that comes with her? Is this Naomi who went to the country of Moab and lived there with her husband and her two sons? The girl is surely her daughter-in-law, who has come back with her." And some of the men of the city came forth also, and they said one to another: "Is this Naomi?" And Naomi, hearing what the men and women said, answered saying: "Naomi was my name, but please do not call me Naomi any more. Yahweh hath dealt very bitterly with me, and hath done me ill. He sent me forth full, and I have come back empty. Therefore let my name be Marah. Please call me Marah, and give up calling me Naomi. The girl with me is Ruth, who was determined to keep close to me and to come back with me."

XIII.

CALL ME MARAH!

(Ruth i. 14–22; iii. 1.)

Ruth: Why do you weep, my mother?

Naomi: Why do I weep! You know that Yahweh hath dealt ill with me.

Ruth: I know indeed that your two sons have died.

Naomi: My husband too; and Orpah hath forsaken us.

Ruth: But I am left, and still I cling to you.

Naomi: Yahweh deal kindly with you, child. God grant that you find rest in this my land!

Ruth: I am determined to find rest with you.

Naomi: Yahweh hath testified against me.

Ruth: His kindness will return, Naomi.

Naomi: Marah!

Ruth: What do you mean, Naomi?

Naomi: Marah! Call me not Naomi. Call me Marah!

Ruth: Why?

Naomi: For very bitterly hath Yahweh dealt with me.

Ruth: You went forth full.

Naomi: And empty have returned.

XIV.

RUTH AND BOAZ.

(Ruth ii. 1–7.)

When Boaz came to his field-portion, he saw many men reaping, and women following them to glean some of the grain. In the midst of the workers was the man in charge of them (set over them) commanding them what to do. When he saw Boaz, he came to meet him and said: "Good day, my lord. It is a good harvest and the ears are full. See! many sheaves are standing in the field." Boaz was greatly pleased at what he saw, and followed the man in charge into the middle of the field. While they were still speaking, Ruth drew near to them. When Boaz saw her, he said: "Whose maid is this who gleans and gathers among the sheaves?" His servant replied: "She is a Moabite maid who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. She has remained here from early morning until now without resting in the field or returning to the house" (see the critical note in Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*).

XV.

RUTH THE GLEANER.

(Ruth ii. 1–10.)

Boaz: Yahweh be with thee!

Chief Servant: Yahweh bless thee, lord!

Boaz: 'Tis good to reap, and right to glean as well!

Chief Serv.: 'Tis a good harvest and the ears are full. See! many sheaves are standing in the field.

Boaz: I see. But tell me, pray, whose maid is this?

Chief Serv.: The maid is Moabite. She hath returned with Naomi from Moab, and hath said: "My lord, let me the reapers follow; let me go and gather 'mid the sheaves and glean some grain!"

Boaz: She hath found favour?

Chief Serv.: Favour found.

Boaz: My daughter, do you hear? Stay in this field, and do not pass away to glean and gather in another field. Keep near the maidens. I'll command the men not to touch thee.

XVI.

RUTH AND THE SERVANT OF BOAZ.

(Ruth i. 22; ii. 1–10.)

It was the beginning of barley-harvest, and many persons, men and women, had gone forth from the city to reap in the country. One of the field-portions belonged to a wealthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. He was a friend of Naomi's husband, well known to him before he went to stay in the country of Moab. Before the beginning of the harvest, Boaz had appointed a young man over the reapers to command them what to do. Now in the morning, while the young man who was set over the reapers stood in the midst of them, Ruth came into the field, for she had happened to choose the field-portion belonging to Boaz. And she spoke to him saying: "Sir, I pray thee let me find favour in your eyes and let me glean some of the grain." And he answered: "You have found favour; go and glean and gather among the sheaves; follow the reapers!"

XVII.

FOLLOW THE REAPERS!

(Ruth i. 22; ii. 1–10.)

Foreman: To-day the barley-harvest has begun.

Reaper: From morning until evening we must reap.

Foreman: Nor rest a little till the work is done.

Ruth: Please let me glean and gather in the field, my lord? Let me find favour in thine eyes!

Foreman: Favour thou'st found, and Yahweh bless thee, child!

Ruth: Peace to thee, master!

Foreman: Follow the reapers. Lo! Boaz cometh out of Bethlehem. The cultivated land (field-portion) thou'st lighted on belongs to him. He is a wealthy man.

Ruth: Naomi knows him; he's a friend of hers.

Foreman: Who is Naomi? Thou art Moabite.

Ruth: Naomi had a son who married me. He died.

Foreman: Go glean and gather in the field.

Reaper: The man who is set over us is kind.

Foreman: Cease speaking. Boaz cometh to the field.

XVIII.

THE DAY'S WORK.

(Ruth ii. 10–18.)

Ruth's mother-in-law asked her to tell her all about the day's work. So Ruth told her all that she had done. She said: "Though I am only a stranger and previously did not know the people of this country at all, Boaz took notice of me and spoke kindly to me. He commanded his servants not to touch me, and not to insult or rebuke me. When I was thirsty, he allowed me to drink some of what his servants had drawn. At mealtime I sat by the side of the reapers and dipped my piece of bread in the vinegar with them. And Boaz handed to me parched corn. I had as much as I could eat, and had some to spare. What I had to spare I have carried from the field to give to you. I gleaned about an ephah of barley, for Boaz commanded his servants to allow me to gather among the sheaves. They even pulled some out of the bundles and left it for me to glean."

XIX.

WHAT HAST THOU GLEANED?

(Ruth ii. 8–23.)

Naomi: Where hast thou gleaned to-day, my daughter? In whose field?

Ruth: In Boaz' field I've gleaned, for in the master's eyes I have found grace. Though but a stranger, he hath noticed me, hath spoken kindly to me, comforted his handmaid; to his men hath given charge not to insult me, nor rebuke, nor touch. If ever I was thirsty, I might drink of what his servants drew. At meal-time too I sat beside the reapers and might eat of what they ate; might dip in vinegar with them my bit of bread. I am become as one of Boaz' maids.

Naomi: Now let me speak! What thou hast said is very good to hear, hath gladdened my heart. The man is kind.

Ruth: But all that he hath done thou hast not heard. At meal-time he hath reached to me parched corn, so much that I did eat and have to spare.

Naomi: Thou hast found grace, but keep beside his maids; let no one meet thee in another field.

Ruth: I follow them, for he hath said to me: "Keep by my servants till the work is done."

Naomi: What hast thou gleaned?

Ruth: About an ephah. For barley from the bundles did they pull, and leave for me to glean.

Naomi: Come! let me see what thou hast gleaned. The man be blest of God! It is about an ephah!

Ruth: And see here! I have parched corn to give to thee as well. Of my abundance I did have to spare.

Naomi: He who hath noticed thee be blest of God!

XX.

SISERA AND JAEL.

(Judges iv. 1, 4, 7, 15–19.)

In the days when Deborah, a prophetess, judged in Israel, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of Yahweh. And there was war between Barak and Sisera, commander-in-chief of the army of the king of Canaan. And Yahweh gave Sisera into the hand of Barak. He discomfited all the chariots and all the army of Sisera. Many of the enemies of Israel were slain at the edge of the sword, and Sisera himself alighted from his chariot and fled away quickly on foot. When he had fled a long way, he came to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. Jael was standing at the entrance to the tent, and as soon as she saw Sisera she went to meet him and said: "Turn in unto me, Sir, you are weary and parched with thirst. Let me give you a little milk to drink!" Sisera was indeed weary, so he turned in unto her to the tent. Then Jael said to him: "Sit down, Sir, and let me cover you with a rug!" So he sat down and she covered him with a rug. Then she said: "I will open a bottle of milk and give you some to drink. Then you can lie down and go to sleep."

XXI.

THE POWER OF MIDIAN.

(Judges vi. 1–6.)

"What," he said, "are these caves in the hills?" The man answered: "These are the hiding-places and fastnesses which the children of Israel made for themselves in the days when Yahweh delivered them into the power of Midian." "But why," he said, "did Yahweh give his own people into their power?" The man answered: "Have you not heard that the Israelites did evil in the eyes of Yahweh? Therefore Yahweh said: I will send Midian against my people to destroy the produce of their land together with their sheep and oxen and asses. So Midian came up, and their power prevailed over the Israelites, and they destroyed everything and left nothing to live on (no subsistence) in the land."

XXII.

LIKE A LOCUST-SWARM.

(Judges vi. 5–10.)

They came up like a locust-swarm in number, and brought their cattle with them. Their tents and their camels were innumerable. And he said: "Did not the Israelites cry to Yahweh to help them?" "Yes," said the man, "on account of these things they did indeed cry to Yahweh, for they were brought very low. They remembered Yahweh who brought them up from the land of Egypt and led them forth from the house of bondsmen. They cried unto the God who had delivered them from the power of Egypt and driven forth all who oppressed them. This is the God who had said unto them: Me only shall ye fear of all the gods of the land; to the voice of other gods ye shall not listen."

XXIII.

THE CALL OF GIDEON.

(Judges vi. 11–17.)

Now Gideon, a mighty man of valour, was beating out wheat in the wine-press, for he was afraid of the Midianites and wished to escape their notice. And as he beat out the wheat he said: "Our fathers have told us of wonderful things which Yahweh did for them when he brought them up from the land of Egypt. Why then has this evil befallen us? And why has our God cast off his people and surrendered them to Midian?" And Gideon continued to speak according to these words. While he was still speaking, the messenger of Yahweh appeared unto him and said: "Yahweh be with thee, Gideon! What are these words which thou art speaking? Yahweh wishes to save Israel from Midian, and he sends you to do his work. Be not afraid! Go in thy might, and do not say: I cannot save Israel, because I am too young to do the work of Yahweh. Yahweh can work wonders and signs by the hands of the young and the poor."

XXIV.

GIDEON AND YAHWEH'S MESSENGER.

(Judges vi. 17–21.)

And Gideon said to himself: "I will run and fetch a present for the messenger of Yahweh; he will not, I am sure, move from here until I have returned." So he ran and fetched his present, and set it down before the messenger, who had remained in the same place until he returned. And the messenger said to him: "What is this present which thou hast brought?" Gideon answered: "I have prepared a kid and made unleavened cakes of flour; the flesh of the kid I have put in a basket with the cakes, and the broth I have put in a pot." "Bring them near," said the messenger. So Gideon brought them near. But the messenger did not eat of the flesh, nor did he touch it. And he said to Gideon: "Thou shalt set the flesh and the cakes on yonder rock and pour out the broth." Then he touched the flesh and the cakes with the end of his staff, and when fire went forth from the rock, the messenger vanished from the sight of Gideon.

XXV.

THE DREAM OF THE MIDIANITE.

(Judges vii. 9–15.)

And Gideon said to his page: "I will arise this night and go down to the camp to hear what the men are saying to one another. If you are afraid, you can stay here; but as for me, I know that my hands will be strengthened." Purah, Gideon's page, answered and said: "I also will go down and follow thee." So Gideon went down with Purah his page unto the camp of the enemy. And when they drew near, they heard two men talking. One man had dreamed a dream, and he told it to his neighbour. He said: "I beheld a cake of barley-bread tumbling over in the camp of the Midianites, and it struck a tent so that it fell and turned upside down." And his neighbour said: "This is the sword of Gideon and his mighty men. God has delivered us and all our camp into his hand." Then Gideon said to his page: "Did you hear what these men said?" And the page answered: "Yes, I heard their words and the interpretation of the dream." "Let us return to our camp," said Gideon, "and make known to my warriors that Yahweh has delivered the camp of the Midianites into our hands." So they ran back to the camp.

XXVI.

GIDEON AND PURAH, HIS PAGE.

(Judges vii. 9–15.)

Gideon: I will arise this night and get me down unto the camp.

Purah: My master, do not go!

Gideon: I will, and thou shalt follow me.

Purah: I fear to go with thee, for I am still a boy.

Gideon: Fear not! For I have heard an angel's voice which said: Go down unto the camp, and listen to the words which men shall speak.

Purah: The men are many like a locust-swarm and like the sand upon the shore for multitude.

Gideon: Come! Yahweh will strengthen our hands.

XXVII.

GIDEON'S PURSUIT.

(Judges viii. 12–21.)

Gideon pursued after the kings of Midian, and the men who went with him became faint. When therefore he came to a town, he commanded the people to give his men food to eat and water to drink. Then they hastened on again and pursued after the two kings who had fled to a great distance. And seeing a man sitting in a tent, Gideon asked him what had become of the two kings. The man was afraid to answer, for the kings of Midian had terrified him. So Gideon took thorns and thistles and said: "If you do not answer, I shall teach you a lesson with these." Then the man told Gideon all that he knew and the way that the kings had gone. And Gideon captured his two enemies, and took much spoil, for their men had rings of gold and their camels crescents of silver. And he did not suffer the kings to live, but drew his sword and attacked them with all his strength and killed them.

XXVIII.

ABIMELECH OF SHECHEM.

(Judges ix. 1–6.)

The kinsmen of the mother of Abimelech lived in Shechem. So Abimelech thought, "I will go to Shechem and will speak to the whole clan to which my mother's family belongs. They are my own kinsmen and are sure to pay attention to what I say. It cannot be right for seventy men to rule over them. They will surely say to me: Rule thou over us, Abimelech, for thou art our kinsman, our own flesh and blood. They will give me ninety shekels of silver from their temple, and with them I can hire some worthless and reckless men." And the citizens of Shechem did as Abimelech had thought. And he killed all his brothers except Jotham, whom he could not find. Now there was in Shechem a monument-tree (see note in Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*). Here all the men of Shechem assembled and made Abimelech king. And Jotham heard of all that the men of Shechem had done, and he was angry with them.

XXIX.

JOTHAM'S PARABLE.

(Judges ix. 8–14.)

Once upon a time the trees assembled together with the idea of anointing a king over them. And they said to one another: "Let the olive reign over us; let him leave off his fatness wherewith gods and men are honoured, and come and rule over us." But the olive said: "I refuse to listen to you; I will not be your king." Then the trees said: "Let the fig reign over us; let her leave her sweetness and her fine fruit. It is better to rule over us." And the fig answered and said: "I will not cease to give my fine fruit in order to rule over you." Then the trees said to one another: "We will make the vine king over us. Her juice does indeed gladden gods and men, but it is better to rule over us." But the vine answered and said: "I will not cease to gladden all men." Then all the trees said: "The box-thorn will surely listen to us. Let us say to him: We will anoint thee king over us."

XXX.

A KING IN SHECHEM.

(Judges ix. 16–24.)

The people acted in good faith and made the man king over them. And they fought for him and risked their lives and delivered him from the hand of his enemies. But he did not act in good faith and honour toward his people, for he took their sons and slew them. And a certain man, one of the citizens of Shechem, lifted up his voice and said: "Citizens of Shechem, if this man has dealt well by you and by your sons, I wish you joy of him and I wish him joy of you. Trust in him and take refuge in his shadow. But if he has dealt treacherously against you, and has brought violence upon your sons, I pray you treat him as he deserves." And when the king heard of these words, he fled and escaped to another place and stayed there. And the citizens of Shechem fought against the men who had strengthened his hands to kill their sons.

XXXI.

THE TOWER OF THEBEZ.

(Judges ix. 50–57.)

Then the enemy came and encamped against the city and took it; and the king entered with them. And all the people of the city fled quickly to a tower of the city and shut themselves in. Then a woman went up to the roof, and when the enemy drew near to attack the tower she threw an upper millstone and smashed the skull of the king. Now a young man carried the armour of the king. To him he called quickly and said: "Run me through with thy sword!" Then the young man drew his sword quickly and ran him through. And he said: "The king is dead, but a woman hath not killed him." And when the woman saw that he was dead, she said: "God hath requited all the wickedness of the king and hath brought a curse upon him."

XXXII.

JEPHTHAH.

(Judges xi. 1–11.)

Now there was a valiant man of Gilead whose name was Jephthah. And he lived in the land of Tob, because his brethren had driven him forth from his father's house. In this place he gathered about him worthless fellows, and became their chief. And it came to pass when the Ammonites fought with Israel, that the elders of Gilead sent to Jephthah saying: "We pray thee come and fight with us against the Ammonites." But Jephthah answered and said: "Who hated me and drove me forth from my father's house? Who made me to flee and to dwell in another land? Ye are the men! And now ye come and say to me: Come back with us to fight against the Ammonites and be our chief. Ye know that I am a man of war, a man of valour, and ye have come to me because ye are in difficulties. I will return with you, but I must indeed be a chief and judge over you."

XXXIII.

JEPHTHAH'S VOW.

(Judges xi. 30–40.)

Now Jephthah had vowed unto the Lord saying: "If the Lord will give the Ammonites into the hand of his people, his servant Jephthah will make an offering to the Lord. When he returns in peace to his house, that which cometh forth from the door shall be a burnt-offering to the Lord." And Jephthah fought and smote the enemies of his people with great slaughter; and all the people rejoiced greatly. Now Jephthah had no sons; but he had a daughter, and she was his only child. His daughter rejoiced when her father smote his enemies, and she came forth from the house to meet him with timbrels and dances. And when Jephthah drew near to the house, he saw her, and he cried with a loud voice and said: "Alas! my daughter, thy father hath opened his mouth to the Lord and cannot turn back." And his daughter said to him: "If my father Jephthah hath opened his mouth to the Lord, he must do to me according to the words that have gone forth from his mouth."

XXXIV.

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER.

(Judges xi. 34–40.)

But when Jephthah saw what he had done, he rent his clothes. And he said to himself: "The thing which I have spoken of shall not be done to-day. I will let her alone for two months. Let her go and wander about on the hills with her friends (fem.) and bewail her virginity. At the end of two months I will send and fetch her back and will do with her according to the vow which I have vowed." So the daughter of Jephthah went and roamed about on the hills. And when she came back her father did as he had said; and the daughters of Israel wept. And it became a custom in Israel to make lamentation for the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

XXXV.

SAMUEL AND THE VOICE.

(I Samuel iii. 1–11.)

Samuel: My father, here am I!

Eli: Why comest thou?

Samuel: For thou didst call.

Eli: I called thee not, my son.

Samuel: My father, surely thou didst call! Twice have I come, and now I come again. Twice hast thou said: Go, lay thee, down, my son.

Eli: I called thee not.

Samuel: Who called me then?

Eli: My son, the matter is revealed to me. The caller is thy Lord. He speaks to thee, and very precious is the word of God. Go back and lay thee down, and if the voice be heard again as 'twas at other times, do thou reply and say: "Speak, Lord, I pray, for I thy servant hear. Make me to know the precious words of God. In vision or in dream reveal thyself."

Samuel: I will go back again and lay me down, and all that thou commandest I will do.

XXXVI.

DAVID AND NATHAN.

(II Samuel xii. 1–7.)

[From George Peele's "David and Bethsabe."]

David: But what saith Nathan to his lord the king?

Nathan: Thus Nathan saith unto his lord the king.

There were two men both dwellers in one town:
The one was mighty and exceeding rich
In oxen, sheep, and cattle of the field;
The other poor, having nor ox, nor calf,
Nor other cattle, save one little lamb
Which he had bought and nourish'd by the hand;
And it grew up, and fed with him and his,
And ate and drank as he and his were wont,
And in his bosom slept, and was to him
As was his daughter or his dearest child.
There came a stranger to this wealthy man;
And he refus'd and spar'd to take his own,
Or of his store to dress or make him meat,
But took the poor man's sheep, the poor man's store,
And dressed it for this stranger in his house.
What, tell me, shall be done to him for this?

David: Now, as the Lord doth live, this wicked man
Is judg'd and shall become the child of death;
Fourfold to the poor man shall he restore,
That without mercy took his lamb away.

Nathan: Thou art the man; and thou hast judg'd thyself.

XXXVII.

IDOLATRY AND WITCHCRAFT.

(II Kings xv.—xvii.)

Then the man of God raised his voice and spoke saying: "O king, thou hast done things evil in the sight of God; thou hast not caused the people to turn away from the sins of their fathers, but hast caused them to sin. They have done according to the abominations of the nations which Yahweh had driven out before them; they have burned offerings on the high-places and sacrificed on the hills; they have made their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire. They have set up their pillars and their poles on all the high hills and under every spreading tree. They have practised sorcery and divination, and have rejected the covenant of Yahweh and have provoked him to anger. But thou hast done worse evil than the people, for thou art the man who has caused them to sin. Therefore Yahweh shall smite thee, and thou shalt become a leper, and until the day of thy death thou shalt dwell in a separate house."

XXXVIII.

A BAD KING.

(II Kings xvii. 1–4, 7–15.)

Now this king did more evil in the sight of Yahweh than any of the kings of Israel that were before him. And, although he had become subject to the king of Assyria, he acted falsely, conspiring against him and refusing to render him tribute. So the king of Assyria restrained him and put him in prison. And this happened because he had sinned against Yahweh, the God who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt and rescued them from the power of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. For Yahweh had commanded the king and the people to keep his law and his statutes which he gave to their fathers by means of his servants the prophets. He made a covenant with their fathers, and they believed in him and served him. Woe to the king who despises this covenant and stiffens his neck to turn aside from the good ways of his fathers to provoke Yahweh to anger!

XXXIX.

THE FEAR OF YAHWEH.

(II Kings xvii. 24–41.)

Now the nations which the king of Assyria had carried captive to Samaria did not fear Yahweh. There was no priest dwelling among them to teach them and to make known to them the manner of the God of the land. So it came to pass when they first dwelt there that Yahweh afflicted them and sent lions among them which killed many men. And the people were afraid and cried out and said: "O Yahweh, God of the land, we have sinned against thee! We have not done according to thy statutes and ordinances and according to thy law and commandment. We have feared other gods. We have bowed down to them, served them, and sacrificed to them. But now we will fear thee, for we have heard that thou didst stretch forth thy hand and with great power didst bring up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt. We will fear thee, and thou wilt surely deliver us from the lions."

XL.

THE GLORY OF GOD'S WORKS.

(Psalm xix.)

The ends of the earth declare the work of God's hands, and the firmament tells of all his glory. Men pour forth speech from day to day, and proclaim knowledge from night to night. Their words are heard; yea, their voice is gone forth to the end of the world. The sun also is a witness. It goeth forth from one end of the heavens to the other. It runs its course, and rejoices like a mighty man; it goes forth like a bridegroom from his canopy. Great is its heat and nothing is hid from it. The laws of the Lord are perfect; they refresh the soul, give light unto the eyes of the simple, rejoice all hearts, and make men wise. All this testimony is sure and stands for ever. Gold and fine gold are desired, honey and the droppings of honeycombs are sweet; but the judgments of the Lord are more desirable and sweeter than these.

XLI.

THE GREAT SHEPHERD.

(Psalm xxiii.)

The people of Yahweh are like sheep; he is their Lord and their shepherd. He will rule over them, and they shall not want. They lie down in pastures of young grass. Like the shepherd, He gently guideth them and bringeth them to waters of repose. As for me, I have put my trust in Him day and night. And he hath refreshed my soul and hath led me in right tracks. I have walked in a ravine of deep gloom, but I have not feared evil. For my shepherd has been with me; he has comforted me with his club and his staff. He has laid out a table in the sight of my adversaries. He has made my head fat with oil; and behold my cup runneth over! Goodness and kindness shall pursue the righteous man all the days of his life, and Yahweh shall make him to dwell in his house for length of days.

XLII.

JONAH AND THE STORM.

(Jonah i. 1–12.)

Captain: The storm is great; the ship is like to break. Go, tell the sailors now to cast the cargo to the sea, to lighten us.

Chief Sailor: That which the captain orders shall be done.

Captain: And bring to me the Hebrew who hath paid his fare to go with us to Tarshish.

Chief Sailor: The Hebrew is below, hath laid him down, and now is fast asleep.

Captain: Bring him to me!

Chief Sailor: I will.

Captain (to himself): The Hebrew fleeth from before his god, and all this evil hath upon us come on his account. His god is angry, and hath hurled upon the sea this mighty wind and storm.

Jonah: I am here!

Captain: The sea grows more and more tempestuous. On thy account has this great tempest come. What shall I do to thee that so the sea may be at peace? Tell me! My sailors all are very much afraid, for they do know that from thy god thou art a fugitive.

Jonah: This tempest is indeed on my account. The sea demands a sacrifice, I know. So let the sailors lift me up and throw me to the sea. Then will the raging of the tempest cease, and all the sea will be again at peace.

XLIII.

THE SWIFT SHALL NOT ESCAPE.

(Amos ii.)

I destroyed their enemies before them, and I brought them up from the land of Egypt and led them forty years through the wilderness. I raised up a great prophet for them, and revealed my secret to him that he might instruct them and help them. But their transgressions are many. They have rejected my law, and have not kept my statutes. They have profaned my name, and have not returned unto me. Therefore I will visit their transgressions upon them, and will afflict them for all their iniquities. I will slay their princes and cut off their judges. I will send a fire against them, and it shall consume their palaces. I will destroy their fruit above and their roots below. Even the hero I will cause to flee, and the arrows of the bowmen shall be broken. The refuge of the stout-hearted and the swift shall fail, and those who ride on horses shall not escape.

XLIV.

VISIONS OF AMOS.

(Amos vii. 1–6, 7–9, 14–15; viii. 1–8.)

Amos was not the son of a prophet, but was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamores. Yahweh, however, took him from following the flock and commanded him to go and prophesy. And these are three visions which Amos the prophet saw. One day he saw a swarm of locusts. And he thought: "What is this locust-swarm?" And Yahweh said unto him: "The locusts have come to eat up the vegetation of the land, and they will not cease until they have finished devouring it." Another day the prophet saw a man of war who stood by a wall of steel (אֲנָךְ) with steel in his hand. And he thought: "What is this steel?" And Yahweh said unto him: "I am about to put steel in the midst of the people of this land. I will lay waste the sanctuaries of Israel, and will smite the house of Jeroboam at the edge of the sword." And yet again the prophet saw a basket of summer fruit. And he thought: "What is this?" And Yahweh said unto him: "Thou seest a basket of summer fruit. Behold the end of my people Israel is at hand. The songs in the palace shall cease, and all the inhabitants of the land shall mourn. I have not forgotten those who crush the weak and the poor, and everywhere many corpses shall be cast forth." And when the prophet had seen these visions, he said: "O Yahweh! I pray thee relent and forgive."

XLV.

THE SCOURGE OF GOD.

(Isaiah v. 25–28.)

My anger is kindled against my people. I will stretch out my hand against them, and will surely smite them. There shall come from afar, from the ends of the earth, a terrible nation, for I have given it a signal (lifted up a banner to it). It shall come speedily; it shall not delay. It has horses whose hoofs are like flint, and chariots of which the wheels are like a whirlwind. Every man has sharpened his arrows and bent his bow. None has slumbered nor slept. Every man has said: "I will take heed lest the girdle of my loins be loosened and the latchet of my shoes be broken."

XLVI.

THE CALL OF A PROPHET.

(Isaiah vi. 1–8.)

In the year in which the king of Judah died the prophet went up to the temple and saw a vision. The Lord sat on his high throne, and the seraphs stood above him. And a voice was heard saying: "Holy is the Lord of Hosts; his glory fills the whole earth." And as the prophet looked, behold the threshold shook and the temple became full of smoke. Then he himself trembled, for he thought: "Though I am a man of unclean lips, I have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." But while he stood and trembled, one of the seraphs flew to him and said: "Behold I touch thy lips, and the Lord hath removed thy sin. Thou art become a messenger of the Lord, and shalt go forth and declare unto this people the words of truth."

XLVII.

A DOOMED LAND.

(Isaiah vi. 9–11; vii. 2, 6, 18–24.)

This people shall hear and shall not understand, shall see and shall not know. Their hearts shall become fat, and their ears shall become heavy. Therefore thus saith Yahweh: "I will hiss to the fly and to the bee, and will cause them to come and settle in the ravines of the precipices and on all thorn-bushes, and in all pastures. Then shall the heart of this people shake like the trees of a forest. For cities shall become a desolation, and the land shall be deserted. The enemy shall come up against Judah with bow and arrow, and shall force a way into it (make a breach in it). Cities shall be left without inhabitants and houses without men. The whole land shall become a cattle-run and a sheep-walk."

XLVIII.

THE TESTIMONY OF ISAIAH.

(Isaiah viii. 1–16, 18.)

And the wife of the prophet Isaiah bare him a son, and Yahweh said: "Before this child learns to say "Father" and "Mother," the king of Assyria shall come with a great army and carry off the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria. The waters of Shiloah flow gently, but this people hath rejected them. Therefore, saith Yahweh, there shall come up against them the mighty waters of a great river. They shall rise over all their channels, and go over all their banks. Yea, they shall overflow and fill the width of the land and reach even to the neck. All the plans of this people shall come to nought, and all their schemes shall fail. They say "Conspiracy!" when there is no conspiracy, and they say "Terror!" when there is no terror. They fear many things, when I, Yahweh of Hosts, should be their fear and dread. Behold, my prophet and the children that I have given him are for signs and portents. They are sure witnesses. They testify and declare what shall come upon this people if they continue to reject my law and commandments."

XLIX.

A CAPABLE WOMAN.

(Proverbs xxxi. 10–31.)

Wilt thou hear of a capable woman? I'll tell thee now of one, who is precious beyond the rubies in all that she hath done. Her children pronounce her blessed, her husband sings her praise; a pious, virtuous woman, upright in all her ways. The night is hardly over when she rises her work to start, to prepare a meal for the household, and give her maids their part. Her loins are girded with vigour; her arms are strengthened by toil; the works of her hands bring blessings, like ships from a distant soil. Wool and flax she procures her, and makes for the household their mail; rugs she makes for her children lest the snow should make them quail. She selleth also to merchants, and good is the trade thereby. With the fruit of her hands she buys a field; a vineyard plants she nigh. Her mouth is full of wisdom, there is kindness upon her tongue. She knows neither fear nor falsehood, and laughs at the days to come.

L.

A DELIVERER OF THE NATIONS.

(From Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha.")

O my children; my poor children!
Listen to the words of wisdom,
Listen to the words of warning,
From the lips of the Great Spirit,
From the Master of Life, who made you!
I have given you lands to hunt in,
I have given you bear and bison,
I have given you roe and reindeer,
I have given you brant and beaver,
Filled the marshes full of wild-fowl,
Filled the rivers full of fishes;
Why then are you not contented?
Why then will you hunt each other?
I am weary of your quarrels,
Weary of your wars and bloodshed,
Weary of your prayers for vengeance,
Of your wrangling and dissensions;
All your strength is in your union,
All your danger is in discord;
Therefore be at peace henceforward,
And as brothers live together.
I will send a prophet to you,
A Deliverer of the nations,
Who shall guide you and shall teach you.
If you listen to his counsels,
You will multiply and prosper;
If his warnings pass unheeded,
You will fade away and perish!

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